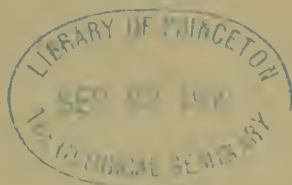


T.V. Moore

Inspiration of the Scriptures:
Morell's Theory Reviewed

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MORELL'S THEORY REVIEWED.

A LECTURE

ON THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY:

DELIVERED AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,

NOVEMBER 24, 1850.

BY THE REV. T. V. MOORE,

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INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES:

MORELL'S THEORY DISCUSSED AND REFUTED.

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Has God spoken in an authenticated form to man? is one of the most momentous questions that man can ask or answer. If he has not, then a thousand demands of duty and of destiny crowd upon us for solution. What am I? Whence am I? Whither am I bound? Why am I here? What relation has my here to my hereafter? and kindred queries, rise clamorous and pressing upon the soul. We bend over the cradle to learn the mystery of our origin, but no note of intelligence comes from the little unconscious one that nestles there. We strain our gaze into the gloom of the grave to unravel the problem of our destiny, and ask "if a man die, shall he live again?" but no reply comes up from the voiceless dwelling of the worm, the clod, and the coffin. We turn to the living multitude, the rushing tide of men, and ask, what is truth? What is duty? What is happiness? What is safe-

ty? and there come up to us the infinite voices of a Babel confusion. The philosopher says it is here; the poet says it is here; the Brahmin says it is with me; the Gnostic says it is with me; the Academy and the Porch, the stern Stoic and the courtly Epicurean each cry that the light has come only to them; the Moslem points to the pale gleam of the Crescent and the Jew to the red glare of Sinai; the idealist and the materialist, the mystic and the sensationalist, the sceptic and the traditionalist, the eclectic and the indifferentist, all affirm that they only have the true voice of reason, and the true theory of existence. If then, there is no utterance from the eternal verity, who shall tell us what is the truth amidst this chaotic din of multitudinous voices? If there is no spear of Ithuriel, who shall disenchant for us the lurking spirit of falsity, and give us a test to distinguish the true from the untrue? If there is no clue to this tangled thicket, who shall thread the thorny labyrinth, and pluck for us the fruit of the tree of life? Alas! if we are left to ourselves, with our purblind vision, our flickering light, and our faltering step, the mournful fate of those who have preceded us, relying on the same aids, warns us of what must be our inevitable destiny.

If God has not spoken to man, why did He give him the cruel capacity for such questions as these? If He meant to doom him to the brute's uncertainty, why did He not give him the precious boon of the brute's blank ignorance and content? Why did He furnish light for the eye, sound for the ear, fragrance and food for their respective organs, and a supply for every rightful demand that rises in our nature, but this highest, deepest, most momentous want of the soul?

But has He thus left us? Can it be, that He who preserves man and beast, who feeds the callow young of the sparrow, and hears the lions' whelps when they cry, has forsaken his noblest, greatest work, precisely at that point where it was most important that the law of supply existing below it, should continue to act? Has He left His crowning creature in the crowning purpose and need of his existence, as the

ostrich leaves her egg in the lone and trackless desert, without parental oversight and bereft of parental supply? No! The deepest instincts of our nature, the widest generalizations of our experience, and the calmest conjectures of our reason unite in saying, it cannot be; God must have spoken; and if His words can but be recognized in the thousand-voiced din of this earthly Babel, we shall learn the truth to be believed and the duty to be performed.

If then He has spoken, the query arises is it in a form accessible to all, the high and low, the ignorant and learned, the weak of mind as well as the mighty? And is it in a form sufficiently reliable to be made trustworthy to all who have access to it? These questions are equivalent to the inquiry, is such a thing possible to the human soul as the inspiration of the Almighty? If so, can its results be made certainly available to any other mind than that which originally receives it? This throws open to us the whole question of inspiration, its psychological possibility, its nature, its extent, and its existence as a fact in the writings of the Old and New Testament.

The views of those who have written on this wide question vary from the extreme of credulity and word-worship on the one side, to the extreme of scepticism and man-worship on the other. But they may all be thrown into two grand categories; they who affirm in some form, the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible, and they who in form or substance deny it. Of those who affirm it, some contend with J. D. Michaelis, and a few writers of the Socinian school, that some portions of the canonical scriptures are thus inspired and some are not. Others, with Calamy, Haldane, and Gaussen, in their otherwise excellent works on this subject, contend for the theory of verbal dictation, affirming that the canonical writers were the mere amanuenses of the Holy Ghost, writing just the very words that they were directed to write, and directed always to write the very words which they did write; a theory, however, which when defined and explained as

they hold it, is found to be rather an unfortunate and extravagant statement of the truth, than an assertion of positive error. Others again, with Twisten, Smith, Dick, Parry, Wilson, Henderson, Chalmers, and the great body of Protestant theologians, hold, that whilst we need not and cannot affirm that the writers were mere scribes, recording with mechanical accuracy the mere and *ipsissima verba* dictated to them by the Holy Spirit, so that the subjective state of mind of Matthew in recording the fact that Christ was born in Bethlehem, was precisely the same with that of Micah in predicting it: yet that in every case there was such an influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the writers as infallibly to direct them what to say and what to omit, so that we should have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as far as was necessary to the main object of the Bible; and that whilst the very words were not in every case dictated to the writers, yet such an influence of the Spirit extended to the words selected, as to prevent the use of any that would express an error or an untruth. Of those who deny the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, some take the old ground of imposture and fraud, with the French school; others like Priestley and the low rationalistic party, admit the substantial truth of the facts, and veracity of the writers, but deny any divine influence to them, and assert either that the facts are not miraculous, or the record not correct; others, with Strauss, make the entire book a bundle of myths, ranking it with the legends of all ancient nations concerning the heroic ages of their history; whilst others, with Schleiermacher, admit an inspiration, but deny that it is either miraculous, infallible or peculiar to these writers.

The old theory of imposture is now abandoned by nearly all intelligent sceptics, and left to the mere *canaille* of infidelity. It is seen that it fails to account for the admitted facts of the case, to furnish any satisfactory explanation of the conduct of these men, or to account for the existence and influence of Christianity and the Bible as existing facts in hu-

man history. It is felt that these men must have been earnest, true, and sincere, to account for their impress on the world's life, by any of the ordinary laws of human nature; whilst to affirm any other laws, would be to allege a miracle for which there was no proof, to set aside miracles for which there was proof; and therefore to admit a miracle more incredible than those that were rejected. But modern criticism will take a further step than this, and admit that these writers were the actual recipients of a real divine enlightenment, but will deny that they were so enlightened as to be the infallible expounders of truth and duty, or that their writings can be called inspired in any other sense than the word may be loosely and inaccurately applied to the writings of any great, earnest and enlightened men, who have been the subjects of an *afflatus* of genius. This we believe to be essentially the view presented by Carlyle in his essay on Voltaire, and Sartor Resartus, book iii., ch. 7; by Bailey, Leigh Hunt, the Westminster Review, and other organs of literary scepticism or free thinking on religious subjects in our own day.

We have thought it best in an exercise like the present, not to attempt a discussion of the whole subject, which must be little better than a meagre epitome of the common places of apologetical theology; but to refer you to the works already named for a full treatment of the whole theme, and grapple directly with what is the most prevalent form of error on this subject at present in the minds of educated and literary men. Happily for our purpose, we have this theory set forth in a detailed and scientific form, which gives us something tangible and definite to encounter. Mr. Morell, who gained no small reputation, especially among small scholars, by his History of Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century, has published a Philosophy of Religion, in which he presents this theory in the most formal and elaborate manner, and sets up for it the most able and successful defence that we have seen in our language. As the alternative is confessedly between this theory and the old one of plenary inspiration, the over-

throw of the one will be the admitted establishment of the other.

We propose then to subject to a detailed and critical examination, Mr. Morell's Theory of Inspiration, as set forth in his *Philosophy of Religion*.

His theory of Inspiration is based on his psychology, but yet may be described in terms sufficiently explicit, without entering into the details of his system of intellectual philosophy. Adopting the division of the mental operations naturalized in our language by Coleridge, under the terms Reason and Understanding, or as Mr. M. prefers to designate them, the Intuitional and the Logical Consciousness, he affirms inspiration to be exclusively a phenomenon of the pure reason. It is simply an elevation of the intuitive power to a clearer perception of spiritual truth than could ordinarily be attained, but not an influence extending to the reasoning faculties of the writers so as to ensure accuracy of premises or conclusion; nor to their memories securing accuracy of recollection; nor to their judgments ensuring a proper selection of facts and opinions; nor to their writing of these views, reasonings or recollections, ensuring a fair, truthful and infallible record: that this inspiration is not generically different from that which poets and other men of genius enjoy, or from a high degree of personal holiness; that in no proper sense can the phrase be applied to the Bible so as to assert it to be an infallible rule of faith and practice; that the writers of Scripture do not claim any such inspiration for their writings; nor is any such consistent with the nature of the human mind. Such is the theory which he advances as the only rational hypothesis, and as that which is gradually taking its place in the opinions of the literary and philosophical world. Let us first look at the arguments on which he rests it, and then at the positive evidence against it.

It is affirmed that inspiration being a state of the mind, it is impossible that a book can be inspired any more than that a book can reason or feel.

At first sight this would seem to be a mere quibble and play upon words, but the prominence given to it by Mr. M., especially in his chapter on Revelation, shows that he regards it as presenting a plain impossibility in the way of the common theory. But, in spite of the value which he evidently attaches to it, it is obviously equivalent to the allegation, that because genius is an attribute of the mind, therefore there can be no such thing as a work of genius; or because imagination and reasoning are operations of the mind, therefore there can be no work of poetry or logic. Granting for the present, that the inspiration of the canonical writers was not generically different from that of the poet or the philosopher, it will at least follow, that they are governed by the same laws. Now it is certain, that there is no impossibility in giving a record of the mental operations of the poet and the philosopher, which shall be a fair and reliable transcript of the subjective states of mind existing in each particular case, and which shall be rightfully termed poetry and philosophy. Now, if the inspired mind perceives spiritual truth, as the poet and philosopher perceive poetic and philosophical truth, why should that be impossible in the one case, which is possible in the other? Why should the power that produced the inspiration be supposed incapable of extending to the record, and securing a faithful transcript? This is a power which even a man possesses in regard to his fellow, why should it be denied to God? If one man may suggest thoughts to the mind of another, may induce him to record them in his own language, and may superintend that record so as to secure a faithful representation of these thoughts in words, why should the same power be denied to that God who created man and gave him all his powers? It would surely be possible for God to cause a human mind to perceive a perfect system of mathematical truth. It would also be possible for Him so to influence that mind, that it would make a correct record of this system in mathematical language. Such a record would then be an infallible arbiter to which an appeal could be carried in

every case of disputed mathematics. Why is the same process impossible as to religious truth?

It is said with an air of triumph in reply to this, that such a record of religious truth would be no revelation to a mind that was not raised to the same level of spiritual intuitions. Granted, but would it not be a revelation to one that was? The revealed system of mathematical truth would not be a revelation to one who had no mathematical perceptions, but would it not be to one who had? So that even were it true, that the inspired writers recorded nothing but that which could be comprehended only by one who was capable of like spiritual intuitions, still it would be true that to such an one the record might be an infallible transcript of the subjective state of the inspired writer.

But it is not true, that either the value or the comprehension of every part of this record, is limited to minds capable of like spiritual intuitions, any more than it is true that the value and comprehension of every part of Newton's *Principia* are limited to minds capable of the same mathematical perceptions. There are many scientific truths which ordinary minds could never have discovered, but which they readily comprehend when discovered, as Columbus has shown with his memorable egg. So there are many things which the unaided human mind could never have originated in regard to spiritual and eternal realities, or if originated, could never have verified, but which when once stated in language, are clearly and readily comprehended.

We do not as yet affirm, that the Scriptures are verbally inspired, because of the inspiration of the writers, but we do affirm that there is nothing impossible in such a declaration of facts. As an executive proclamation may be declared authoritative because of the authority of him that issued it; as a will may be called testamentary because of the devisory powers vested in the testator; as a book may be called mathematical because of the thoughts which a mathematical mind has embodied in it; so may the Scriptures in the same

sense be called inspired, because they set forth in true and faithful manifestation the mental and spiritual state of their inspired writers.

This preliminary difficulty being removed, we meet Mr. M. on the ground where, after all, the issue must be decided, the contents of the book itself. He affirms that these contents contradict the theory of plenary, verbal inspiration, and demand the one under discussion.

It is said that if the Bible had come from God in this plenary sense, it would have been given in a more perfect and finished form, and not in that fragmentary and successive manner, in pursuance of which, most of its books seem to have been forced into existence by the exigencies of existing circumstances, rather than as the result of a settled plan for revealing a complete system of religious truth.

We ask in return, has not the earth come forth from the immediate hand of God? Why then are not its materials arranged with greater regularity? Why are its rocks not located according to a perfect system of geology, its fauna and flora according to a perfect system of botany, and its animals according to a perfect system of zoology? If there are reasons of convenience to man requiring such an arrangement of God's material revelation of Himself, may not the same arrangements be required in the spiritual revelation of the same great Nature? And if these arrangements do not blot out the mighty sign-manual of Jehovah in the enduring rocks, the waving forests, and the roaming tribes of living things, or cause us to doubt their immediate issue from His hand, why should they have this effect in the unfoldings of Himself in His word? If He built not the mighty masonry of the Alps according to any of the five orders of architecture, and channeled not the rolling rush of the Amazon according to the rules of the engineer, why should we demand that a yet more wonderful revelation of Himself should come forth, Minerva-like, in the hard, polished and inflexible panoply of a rigid methodical science?

If it be replied that the objection is rather to the successive and gradual development in fragments of this alleged revelation, than to its want of scientific arrangement, then we answer this by another question. Does not the geologist tell us that the earth passed through many stages of existence, countless ages before it was fitted for man in its present form? Is it not passing through such changes now? Does this gradual and successive unfolding of its states militate against its origin immediately from the hand of God? Why then should the same fact prove that the Bible in the same plenary sense cannot be the product of the immediate hand of Jehovah?

If it be objected to this analogy, that the revelation of God adduced is one that was made in blind unconscious matter, and not in living and conscious spirits, we meet the evasion from another direction. Those with whom we argue now, assert that God is in human history, and that aside from and beyond the agency of man, there is a direct and immediate exertion of the Divine finger in unfolding its great principles and results. Now has not the Bible, as to the point objected to, come forth precisely according to the unfoldings of human history? Has it not a clearness of arrangement, an unity of purpose, and a completeness of parts, that cannot yet be affirmed of that history? If then we contend that in like wise, above and beyond the human impulses and agencies engaged in the production of the Bible, there was a Divine power specially directing and determining, to the last jot and tittle, its form and structure, shall the fact which does not disprove such an interposition in the world's history, disprove it in the Scriptures?

But we go further and affirm, that this state of facts was more imperatively demanded in the case of the Scriptures than in any of the others. Why was God made manifest in the flesh? Obviously because the great purposes designed to be effected in and for the human race by the incarnation, demanded that the Divine should be manifested through the human, and not through the angelic, or any new form of created

personal existence. Now the very same necessities demanded likewise that the revelation of the Divine to man in thought, emotion and word, should be made through human minds and human hearts. And that it may come in contact with human nature at all its points, it must not be made through but one man, or one class of men, but through such a variety of men as would enable the Divine afflatus to breathe through the whole gamut of human sympathy, emotion and character, from the lowliest fisherman of Galilee, and the humblest herdsman of Tekoah, to the loftiest sage of Egypt, the sublimest bard of Judea, and the subtlest logician of the school of Gamaliel. And the same reasons that made it needful that he who was "God over all, blessed forever," should manifest himself in human form in the "seed of David," made it also necessary that the revelation of the same God in word, should be through this same wondrous Hebrew race. Were the human race all moulded in precisely the same matrix of character, thought, emotion and external position, this objection to the Bible as coming directly from the hand of God, might possibly lie. But with all the varieties and inequalities of human condition, it is as absurd as to challenge the Divine origin of the wondrous vesture of atmosphere that wraps the round earth, because at one time it lies thin and cold on the mountain top, at another dense and heavy in the valley; at one time hangs red and fiery over the far-stretching desert, at another cool and transparent over the dewy landscape of spring; and at one time sleeps softly and pulselessly in the still calm, and at another rushes wildly and fearfully in the terrible hurricane. Variety marks God's handiwork in nature, and cannot therefore disprove it in revelation.

The defective morality of the Old Testament is objected to its plenary inspiration.

If this means that the standard of actual attainment in practical ethics was lower under the Old Testament than under the New, we concede it, but this fact does not touch the question of the inspiration of these books. They record the pre-

cise facts of the case with infallible accuracy, and on the correctness of this record we can rely, for the very reason that it is an inspired document. If however the objection means that the standard of requisition was lower, we meet it with an emphatic denial. Christ gave no moral law that was not found in the Old Testament, and corrected nothing of what was said in the old time but the corrupt glosses and traditions of the fathers. The evil conduct of Noah and David are recorded in warning and condemnation in the Old Testament precisely as we have that of Judas and Peter in the New. And in regard to acts and customs which are there approved, such as are not and ought not to be permitted now, we affirm that under the particular circumstances of the case, they were perfectly consistent with the immutable principles of morality. The Levirate law, the law of the avenger of blood, the water of jealousy, the *judicial* rule of the *lex talionis*, and similar institutions, had their origin in that partly nomadic and imperfect state of social life from which the Hebrew tribes sprang, and were sanctioned and regulated because it was better to allow them temporarily to exist than violently to abolish them; and existing by consent of society and permission of God, they violated no principle of morality. The spoiling of the Egyptians, the extermination of the Canaanites, and similar acts, were done by the command of God; were right then, and if commanded by God would not be wrong now. The rights of life and property are not absolute in man, but only contingent on the will of God, and He may take them away, either by a pestilence and a whirlwind, or by the squadrons of an invading army. Men in such cases are but the executioners, and surely it will not be denied that the right to dispose of human life and property according to His will, is vested in the Creator and Sovereign of all, in the highest and most absolute sense. In all this then there is nothing that contradicts a plenary verbal inspiration.

The inconsistency of the Bible with the results of modern scientific research is also objected.

There is usually much inattention or much disingenuousness evinced in pressing this argument. It is affirmed with great triumph that the writers of the Bible were ignorant of many of the facts of natural science, and hence have used language in regard to the phenomena of the physical world to which they attached conceptions scientifically incorrect. This is deemed sufficient to prove that they did not possess a plenary inspiration. We grant that these writers often used language to which they may have attached notions in their own minds, which, owing to their ignorance of natural science, were scientifically false. But we affirm that this language, when fairly interpreted, does not assert these scientific errors, and that, as we shall subsequently show, their remarkable preservation from the declaration of scientific error is one of the most signal indications of the superintending inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Nor is this peculiar to the language that refers to natural phenomena. The writers of Scripture often used language the real and full signification of which they did not and could not understand. The apostle Peter directly affirms this fact when he states (1 Pet. 1: 10-12) that after the ancient prophets wrote their prophecies they sat down reverently to study their meaning, "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow: unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven." When Malachi declared that Elijah must come, we cannot suppose that he thought of John the Baptist. And when David declared "they parted my garments among them, and on my vesture did they cast lots," we cannot believe that he saw the gambling of the Roman soldiers on Calvary. But in these and similar cases, the writers used language attaching certain conceptions to it, which we now see, not only fairly bears another signification, but was actually

designed to have such a meaning, and hence we give it that interpretation. So we affirm that in precise accordance with this general principle which runs through the whole Bible, Moses, Job, Joshua and David used language referring to natural phenomena, to which they attached conceptions corresponding with the cosmogony and astronomy of the age; but we contend that in no case have they been allowed to assert the truth of these scientific misconceptions. They either used language that is susceptible of an interpretation conformable to the truth, or they used the popular forms of speech that describe things as they seem to be, and not as they are.

We are flippantly told that Joshua talks of the sun standing still; that David speaks of a Hades, which he supposed to be under the earth; that Paul speaks of a third Heaven which he supposed to be just beyond the stellar dome; and that all the writers on the work of redemption speak of the earth as possessing an importance which astronomy shows it does not possess in the universe.

But we ask the objector, does not every treatise on practical astronomy speak of the sun rising, and setting, and crossing the line of the equinox, when in strictness these things are not so? But is any one ever deceived? Is not this use of language an absolute necessity unless we would talk nonsense or confusion? And whatever David thought, does he anywhere assert that Hades *is* under the earth? Does he ever do more than use language intelligible to his contemporaries? And does Paul anywhere assert that Heaven is a mere third story in the great ascending circles of the creation? If then, to show those to whom he wrote that he meant, not the atmospheric or the stellar Heaven, but the Paradise of God, he used the common designation, the third Heavens, did he affirm any proposition that Lord Rosse's telescope shows to be untrue? And when the Scripture doctrine of redemption gives the earth an importance of position that is not assigned to it by astronomy, does it follow that these representations are mutually contradictory? Does not history give to Ther-

mopylæ, Actium and Waterloo an importance that geography does not? But are these representations, though both correct, in any real contradiction? Would not any man be called a fool who would question the statements of history as to the stupendous influence that the scenes there enacted have had on the world's destiny, because these spots are not as large as many a gentleman's plantation? When, therefore, the Bible asserts that the earth is the very Thermopylæ of the universe, shall this same objection be flaunted in our faces, as a mark of superior wisdom and scientific culture?

Suppose a fragment were found in some writer anterior to the age of Hesiod, asserting that the sky which hung over the north pole was not upheld by the walls of a crystal sphere as some contended, but was suspended over the void of empty space, and that the earth itself was self-poised over nothing, would not such a passage be triumphantly adduced by the scholar as a most amazing anticipation of astronomical science in later times? And yet when we find in a writer older than the very language of Greece, the sublime couplet,

"He spreadeth the north over the empty space,
And hangeth the earth upon nothing:"*

such a fragment is skipped over with a contemptuous fling at Hebrew cosmogony.

The same unfairness appears in the objections drawn from geology. The Bible nowhere affirms that the matter of the world is but six thousand years old. On the contrary, when it speaks of the earth as compared with the race of man that lives upon it, it represents the one as the fitting type of that high and solitary One who is from everlasting to everlasting, while the other is as the grass which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up, and in the evening is cut down and withereth. It simply affirms of the Heavens and the earth that in the beginning they were created by God. Does geology contradict this? It also affirms that about six thousand years ago,

* Job 26 : 7.

the earth received in six days substantially its present arrangement, from a pre-existent state of chaotic confusion, and it describes this sublime scene with graphic and dramatic beauty, as it would have appeared to a spectator standing on the earth and gazing on these mighty changes as they went forward. Does geology contradict this, or show it to be impossible? It asserts that some four thousand years ago there was an universal deluge of waters, miraculously and judiciously spread over the earth. Now even if the flood-marks that were once pointed out as traces of the deluge, may be explained on other grounds, is there anything in geological researches that contradicts the testimony of history and tradition in regard to this great and awful fact? Does geology do anything more than leave it an open question? Whilst then we admire this young Titan of the sciences as it upheaves the foundations of the earth, and shows us the mighty corner stones of its structure; and whilst we are grateful to it for its contributions to natural and even remotely to revealed theology; yet when it leaves its pickaxe and hammer among the rocks, and attempts on some Pelion or Ossa of gigantic speculation to scale the battlements of God's own council chamber, and impeach the fidelity of a record with which it has legitimately nothing to do, we must meet it with the stern words that came to the startled Emir of Uz, from the dark throat of the storm—

“ Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?
 Gird up now thy loins like a man;
 I will put questions to thee, and do thou inform me,
 Where wast thou when I founded the earth?
 Declare, if thou hast knowledge!
 Who then fixed the measure of it? For thou knowest!
 Who stretched the line upon it?
 Upon what are its foundations settled?
 Or who laid its corner stone?
 When the morning stars sang together,
 And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
 Who shut up the sea with doors
 In its bursting forth as from the womb?
 When I made the cloud its garment,
 And swathed it in thick darkness?

I measured out for it my limits,
 And fixed its bars and doors;
 And said, thus far shalt thou come, but no further,
 And here shall thy proud waves be stayed !”*

Whilst we know the dignified and reverent response that will be made by the truly philosophical geologist to this sublime challenge ; whilst we rejoice to meet in the Bucklands, the Pye Smiths, the Millers, and the Hitchcocks, men not more eminent for their love of God’s works than their reverence for God’s word ; and whilst we freely acquit this noble science of any antagonism or hostility to revelation honestly interpreted, yet we also know that the stern rebuke it conveys is richly deserved by the sciolist and the smatterer, who ignorant or forgetful of the legitimate province of human science betakes himself to world-building and world-dreaming about “the natural history of creation.”

We cannot go into any further detail in meeting this class of objections, having said enough to indicate the general principles on which all the alleged discrepancies of scientific truth with revelation, may be fully and fairly met and set aside. When the Bible is fairly interpreted, there is no such discrepancy with any established fact of science. The fancies of interpreters and the fancies of philosophers may conflict, but fancies are not facts, and neither science nor revelation should be held accountable for the follies of their friends. God speaking in His works, can never contradict God speaking in His word, and we need give ourselves no anxiety about any possible inconsistency between the two utterances. The watchful and hostile jealousy with which science has sometimes been regarded by good men, as something fraught with possible danger to the truth of revelation, is as impolitic as it is unreasonable. Let the students of each explore their own department without any jealous or suspicious reference to the other, and their results in the end, when clearly reached, will be found as perfectly consistent as the laws of astronomy and

* Job 33 : 1-11. Barnes’ translation.

the facts of geology; like them, the one is of Heaven and the other of earth, but both the interpreters of Him who has made both Heaven and earth.

We do not affirm that every thing in the Bible is true, but we do affirm that every thing which the Bible says to be true, is true. We do not affirm that all the opinions set forth, and all the acts recorded there are right; but we do affirm that these opinions were held and these acts done, precisely as they are represented. We do not affirm that Moses understood geology, David the Copernican system, or Paul the categories and predicables of logic; but we do affirm that neither Moses nor David have declared any thing to be scientifically true, which is scientifically false; and that if Paul sometimes reaches his conclusion by one gigantic bound, instead of climbing the slow ladder of an authorized syllogism, he yet never reaches a conclusion that is untrue, or asserts a premise that is untenable. And if the grinders of Kant's categories say that they cannot understand some of Paul's reasonings, and that they seem to them palpably illogical, we have only to remind them of the gruff response of the old literary Leviathan to a similar objection, "Sir, I am bound to furnish you with arguments, not brains."

It is affirmed that the writers of the Bible do not claim such a power as we ascribe to them. If by this is meant, that each writer does not in express and formal terms always announce, that he is commissioned to write by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we grant it. Suppose that they had made this constant reiteration of plenary authority, would it not then have been objected, that this anxious solicitude to assert these pretensions implied a secret conviction that there was too much ground to question them? Is not this uneasy assertion of Divine authority, such as we see in the Koran or the book of Mormon, one of the recognised marks of imposture? If this feature had been found in the Bible as the objection demands, would not the philosophic eye have detected in it the want of that grand and lofty indifference,

that feeling of the self-evidencing character of their claims, that is the characteristic of all true power and all Divine impulse? Does every message of a President or a King contain a formal statement of the right by which he thus speaks? Does every act and record of a legislature contain the commissions and certificates of election by virtue of which its members enact laws? Does every paper of an ambassador contain a formal assertion of his plenipotentiary powers? Would not such a thing be either suspicious or ridiculous? Why then is it demanded of the writers of the Bible?

Do you say that it is unreasonable to ask you to receive these books as authoritative, without some authentication of their authority? We grant it; but reply that it is equally unreasonable to demand this particular form of authentication, and be satisfied with no other, when it is freely dispensed with in analogous cases. Let the authority of a man to write, speak or act, be distinctly recognized and sanctioned by those competent to decide on his qualifications, and whether he asserts it or not, we are bound to admit it on the endorsement of these competent judges. If then these writers have sometimes asserted positively that they were speaking the very words of God, using such formulas as "thus saith the Lord," &c.; if, in other cases, they have asserted it impliedly by the awful authority they claim for the words they utter, and the terrible sanctions they assert as belonging to them; if, in other cases, an authentication was given them by those whose circumstances enabled them to decide upon the proofs of their commission; if the entire volume was regarded by them as the work of the Holy Ghost, and designated by specific titles, such as the oracles of God, the Scriptures, &c., &c., the absence of this formal claim in each particular case, cannot be held to disprove the alleged inspiration of the Spirit. That the marks above named are found in all the canonical books, is fully shown in any ordinary treatise on the Canon of Scripture.

But, if the absence of a formal claim to a verbal inspiration be an argument against its existence, a similar omission as to any other kind of inspiration must be equally conclusive against its existence. Now it so happens, that the writers of the Scriptures in no instance claim any such inspiration as Mr. M. refers to them, nor is it even pretended, that they have ever done so. If then this alleged absence of claim, (which we do not admit,) disproved the verbal theory, much more must it disprove the one brought in its place, for the wildest dreamer has never pretended, that the writers of the Scriptures claimed to be simply enlightened as to their intuitive consciousness. This objection then, if it proves any thing, proves too much, for it strikes Mr. M.'s theory even more fatally than it does that of plenary verbal inspiration.

But the most extraordinary position taken by Mr. Morell is, that the primitive church did not regard these books as verbally inspired. This is a most marvellous assertion in the direct view of the very superstition with which many in the primitive church regarded the mere words of the Scripture; the mysteries that they often found in the very letters of Holy Writ, and the controversies that existed as to the right of some books to be admitted into the Canon. We cannot enter into the proof of this position in detail, but must be content with referring to sources where that proof is spread out at length. Dr. Rudelbach, a German, has collected the testimonies to this point with great industry and patience. And to those to whom this work is not accessible, we may recommend Paley's *Evidences*, Lardner's *Credibility*; Daillé on the *Fathers*, book 2, chap. 2; Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, book 2, ch. 3, rule 14; Bingham's *Antiquities*, book 14, ch. 3; or Whitby's *Prefaces* in his *Commentary on the New Testament*. In any of these, enough will be found to show that this assertion is grossly incorrect.

Such then is the defence that is set up for this theory of inspiration, which after all is not so much a defence as an attack. It is remarkable, that in accordance with the ancient

tactics on this question, the only plea set up for the new theory is an assault upon the old, as if the overthrow of the one was the necessary establishment of the other. As then we have seen these objections to be unfounded, the old theory remains unharmed, whilst the new one, by its own chosen mode of warfare, is defeated. Here then we might pause, but that the truth may be triumphantly vindicated, we shall take a new position and pass from the attitude of defence to that of attack. We turn now to the positive evidence against this theory.

The first objection we urge against this theory is, that it is a mere figment, invented without any reference to the facts to be explained, or the phenomena to be elucidated.

Sidney Smith once wittily objected to reading a book before reviewing it, because it had such a tendency to prejudice a man. One would be almost disposed to think that Mr. M. had taken the advice of the laughter-loving Canon of St. Paul's. He undertakes to describe the subjective condition of inspired men, and yet not once does he refer to the account given by these men themselves of their state of mind. He professes to furnish a theory that shall explain all the facts of the case, yet never once alludes to those facts in constructing this theory. He assumes a certain psychology, and because he cannot find in its ordinary workings such a phenomenon as verbal inspiration, he denies its existence, in the very face of the reiterated affirmation that this is not one of the ordinary, but one of the extraordinary, phases of the human soul. He forms his theory and then tells us that if the facts are not conformable to it, they ought to be, and gives himself no further trouble with them. This mode of procedure in constructing any hypothesis is unphilosophical, but in framing a theory on facts so unique and solemn as these, it is unpardonable.

But it is not only constructed without reference to the facts to be explained, but also in direct inconsistency with them.

It asserts that inspiration belongs to the writers of Scripture, but not to the Scripture itself. This assertion is flatly con-

tradicted in the account given by the writers themselves of the matter. 2 Tim. 3 : 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Here it is asserted that the writing is inspired, and not simply the writers, and a writing can be inspired only by a verbal inspiration. The *theopneusty* is affirmed of the Scripture and not of the writers. If it be asked what is meant by this *theopneusty*, or inspiration of God, we are answered in 2 Pet. 1 : 21, "Holy men of God *spake* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The words of Scripture then were the result of the action of the Holy Ghost on the minds of the writers, and therefore, the subjects of inspiration. To place this beyond all question, the same Apostle asserts, (1 Pet. 1 : 10-12,) that these men did not always know the full significance of the words they were directed to use, but searched into their meaning, because these words were intended rather for a later age of the Church than for that which first received them. And this language is sanctioned by our Lord himself when he affirms, Matt. 22 : 43, that David *spake* by the Holy Ghost when inditing the Psalms ; and extended to the whole Jewish Canon, when he appeals to the Scriptures on every question concerning truth and duty, stating that they cannot be broken, (John 10 : 34, 35) ; that they are an infallible tribunal of appeal in every question as to God's will, (Matt. 19 : 4-6 ; John 5 : 39,) thus sanctioning the doctrine of the Jewish Church as to these writings, that they are truly the word of God. And this verbal inspiration is affirmed by our Lord yet more emphatically, when we find him at times basing important arguments on the mere and apparently casual use of a word, as in the case of the doctrine of the resurrection. Matt. 22 : 32. It is also implied, where he directs the Jews to search the Scriptures, as a perfect standard of truth, and declares that whilst heaven and earth shall pass away, not one jot or tittle of them shall ever pass away unfulfilled. These strong affirmations it must be noted were made not of the mental state

of the writers, but of their writings, thus endorsing the claim set up for these writings as the word of God, the oracles of God, and the writings that stood apart and sacred from all others as the infallible standard of truth and duty. This high claim was extended from the Old Testament to the New, by Peter, when he classed the writings of Paul with the other Scriptures, 2 Pet. 3 : 16. How far this Divine superintendence and authority extended, is explained by Paul when he says, 1 Cor. 2 : 13, "Which things we speak not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" and also, 1 Thess. 2 : 13, "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." And lest this should be referred to his oral rather than his written instructions, he expressly affirms in 2 Cor. 10 : 11, and 2 Thess. 2 : 15, that they are of equal authority. When therefore, it is affirmed that all Scripture is inspired; that the very words are taught by the Holy Ghost; when Paul explains in what sense he uses this language, as to his own writings, and Peter extends this sense to all the rest, by classifying Paul's writings with "the other Scriptures," can there be a more audacious misstatement, than that which alleges that these men do not claim for their writings the plenary verbal inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

This theory is contradicted by the authority which these writers claim for their writings.

A clear and broad distinction is made between these and all other writings, declaring the one to be the word of man, the other the word of God. Many of them prefix to their statements the formula, "thus saith the Lord," which, if it means any thing, must mean that the words they were about to utter, were not theirs, but God's. Hence they claim the most awful authority for every thing that they say, and demand our unconditional belief under the most terrific penalties. They say, "We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us," 1 John 4 : 6; "We *command* you brethren, in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. 3 : 6 ; "He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God," 1 Thess. 2 : 13. If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed. Here is an authority the most fearful known to men, claimed to challenge belief. Belief is the assent of the mind to a proposition. A proposition must be set forth in words. To demand belief therefore, under sanctions so terrible, is to claim an authority for their words which can only be explained on the theory of their plenary verbal inspiration.

This theory is contradicted by the specific promises of Christ made to his disciples.

Every man who has a new discovery in science to announce to the world, takes care to secure such a vehicle of transmission as shall, with all possible accuracy, declare precisely what his discoveries are. Every government which has any great transaction to proclaim, whether it be a law, a treaty, or an amnesty on specified conditions, uses great care in securing correctness in its records, that these records may clearly and certainly set forth the precise facts which are necessary to be known, in a form that will be trustworthy and reliable. Were a government to be careless on this point, it would be justly chargeable with a gross and criminal indifference to the interests and rights of its subjects. It was justly regarded as one of the most atrocious marks of tyranny and injustice in a Roman emperor, that he enacted laws and caused them to be hung up so high on pillars that no one could with certainty and distinctness make out their precise requisitions.

Now if it be true that there are great discoveries of life and immortality to be brought to light in the gospel, is it credible that no special arrangements would be made to secure the record of these discoveries in language that will not deceive or mislead? If the government of God has laws to proclaim, treaties of reconciliation to propose, and amnesties of pardon on certain conditions to offer, would it not be a refinement of cruelty beyond that of Caligula, to require us to conform to these high transactions on peril of eternal penalties, and yet

make no arrangements by which we should certainly know what they were? Would it not be monstrous to suppose that these awful utterances of the Eternal voices were flung forth to the winds, with less care to secure the certain accuracy of their record than was given to the leaves that came forth from the cave of the Cumæan Sibyl? The supposition is incredible, yet it is the precise supposition required by the theory under discussion. But what are the facts of the case? Did Jesus Christ, after such unspeakable toil and agony to work out a plan of salvation for man, make no arrangements for its secure record and transmission to those for whom it was intended? Did he do even less than Caligula, who at least caused his enactments to be written? Did he treat this most wondrous of all the productions of creative might, as the ostrich treats her egg, leaving its preservation to the oversight of mere chance? No! He promised a specific Divine assistance in communicating this religion to men. "The Holy Ghost shall teach you what you ought to say." "The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things." "He shall guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come." Luke 12: 12; John 14: 26; 16: 13; 15: 26, 27, &c. In these and kindred passages, Christ promises to the disciples, (1.) That the Holy Ghost should be given to them. (2.) That He would suggest to them the very words they must utter, so that even premeditation was not necessary. (3.) That as conversations were to be stated which no ordinary memory could retain, and facts announced which no ordinary sagacity could predict, their minds should be certified as to the past, the present and the future. (4.) That as the result of this, their words were deserving of the most unquestioning faith as infallibly true.

Now we care not how you limit this promise, still it explains the nature of inspiration in a way that overthrows this theory. Even if limited to the specific case in reference to which it was made, it affirms the extension of inspiration to

the very words of the inspired men, giving those words a Divine, and therefore, an infallible authority. This is in direct contradiction of the theory under discussion.

But to suppose its limitation to one specific case, is to stultify our Lord in the arrangements he made for the promulgation of his laws, and the extension of his kingdom; as well as to charge him with the most heartless indifference to those for whom he showed the highest possible regard and interest, in the highest possible way. It would be to suppose the giving of Divine aid when his followers needed it least, and withholding it when they needed it most. It would be to suppose that they had this inspiration when they were speaking to a few Jews with the tongue, and that they had it not when they were speaking to the whole world in the most distant generations, by the pen. It would be to suppose that this Divine influence was extended to their words when nothing depended upon those words but their acquittal before some petty tribunal, but was withdrawn when the belief or unbelief of these words was to determine the salvation of unborn millions. These suppositions being preposterous and incredible, the promises of our Lord most distinctly guarantee the verbal inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the promulgation of his religion, and therefore in the Scriptures, its promulgation to the whole world.

Another fact that stands in contradiction of this theory is, the remarkable freedom of these men from the errors incident to their age.

Had they all been men of the same generation and the same country, so that mutual understanding might be supposed; had they been disciples of the same school, trained under the same influences, or even all been men of a high degree of mental culture, this remarkable fact might more readily be explained. But the reverse of these are the facts. They were men of every grade, both of intellect and culture, from the sage who was versed in all the lore of Egypt, and the orator who studied at the feet of Gamaliel, to the lowly herdsman of

Tekoa, and the unlettered fisherman of Galilee. They were found in every part of the civilized world, from the templed margin of the solemn Nile, to the shady banks of the lordly Euphrates; from the lonely sands of Arabia, and the rocky deserts of Judea, to the metropolitan splendors of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth and Rome. They were trained under every school of belief, from the dreamy pantheism of Central Asia, and the gigantic astrologies of Egypt, to the gorgeous polytheism of Greece, and the godless epicureanism of Rome. They run through fifty generations of the human race, from the sage who wrote, and the bard who sung, six hundred years before Lycurgus gave his laws, or Homer tuned his lyre, to the lonely exile of Patmos, who saw the splendid sunset of the Augustan day of Roman literature and art. They give us every species of composition, from those daring lyrics that seem written to the awful notes of the whirlwind or the terrible crash of the thunder, to the most jejune genealogies and the most iron-jointed chain-work of argument. They allude incidentally to every department of Nature, from Arcturus and Orion, to the lilies of the field.

Now why do we find these writers agreeing with each other so wonderfully that no fair mind has, as some of the first intellects of the world believe, ever yet detected a contradiction? Why have they given us a philosophy sublimer than Plato's, and an ethics purer than Aristotle's? And why do they so strangely escape the errors of their day? Why have they not given us such theogonies and cosmogonies as Hesiod, Ovid and Lucretius; such pantheism as the Greeks; such astrology as the Egyptians; or such wild, monstrous and incredible tales as we have gravely recorded in the Natural Histories of Aristotle and the elder Pliny? Why have these fifty men, writing during the fifteen hundred years that cover the four great monarchies, and the splendid eras of Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Grecian and Roman civilization, and appearing, most of them at least, in an obscure and trampled province, yet been kept from mere scientific error, as no fifty writers of the

same period have been, even though you select them from the most learned and lofty intellects of the age?

If it be said that it was the nature of the subjects on which they wrote, that preserved them from error and puerility, then we place the fifty fathers of the Christian church beside the fifty writers of the Scripture, and ask why the nature of the subjects did not preserve them from such mistakes? Read Tertullian's ascription of feeling and understanding to plants; Augustine's vehement and scornful denunciation of the allegation that there were antipodes; Ambrose's opinion that the sun drew up water to cool and refresh himself in his extreme heat; and countless errors in history, geography, philology and criticism; and tell us why these fifty men, writing during fifteen hundred years, were exempted from the errors into which the fifty Christian fathers fell, writing, with the Scriptures in their hands, during less than five hundred years?

If it be said that it was because of the darkness that settled on the world after the waning of the Roman glory, we meet this evasion by an *exemplum crucis*. Barnabas, the companion of Paul, a man testified to have been full of faith and the Holy Ghost, has left behind him an epistle, which the primitive church held in high estimation, but never placed in the canon. The authenticity and genuineness of the parts we shall quote, are sufficient to use it in argument. If this freedom from error arose from the circumstances in which these men were placed, of course Barnabas must share it, and we need not resort to the superintending inspiration of the Holy Ghost to explain it. But if we find in Barnabas the same errors and puerilities that marked all other writers of his age, but those of the New Testament, we must infer that these writers enjoyed some influence which was not possessed by others. Let us then look at a few paragraphs from the Catholic epistle of Barnabas.

"Abraham received the mystery of three letters. For the Scripture says, that Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his house. But what therefore was the mys-

tery that was made known to him? Mark first the eighteen, and next the three hundred. For the numeral letters of ten and eight, are I H. And these denote Jesus. And because the cross was that by which we were to find grace, therefore he adds, three hundred; the note of which is T, (the figure of his cross.) Wherefore by two letters, he signified Jesus, and by the third his cross." § 9.

"But why did Moses say 'ye shall not eat of the swine, neither the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the crow, nor any fish that has not a scale upon him?' I answer that in the spiritual sense, he comprehended three doctrines. Now, the sow he forbade them to eat; meaning thus much: thou shalt not join thyself to such persons as are like unto the swine, who, whilst they live in pleasure, forget their God, but when any want pinches them, then they know the Lord; as the sow when she is full, knows not her master, but when she is hungry, she makes a noise, and being again fed is silent. Neither, saith he, shalt thou eat the lamprey, nor the polypus, nor the cuttle fish, that is, thou shalt not be like such men, who are altogether wicked and adjudged to death. For so these fishes are alone accursed, and wallow in the mire, nor swim as other fishes, but tumble in the dirt at the bottom of the deep. Neither shalt thou eat of the hyena, that is, be an adulterer; because that creature every year changes its kind, and is sometimes male and sometimes female. For which cause, also, he justly hated the weasel, to the end that they should not be like such persons who commit wickedness with their mouths; because that animal conceives with its mouth."

"Therefore David took aright the knowledge of his three-fold command, saying in like manner: "blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, (Ps. 1: 1,) as the fishes before mentioned in the bottom of the deep in darkness; nor stood in the way of sinners; as they that seem to fear the Lord, but yet sin, as the sow. And hath not sat in the seat of the scornors, as those birds who sit and watch that they may devour. Here you have the law concerning

meat fully set forth, and according to the true knowledge of it." § 10.

"But why might they eat those that clave the hoof? because the righteous liveth in this present world, but his expectation is fixed upon the other." § 10.

Compare these puerile conceits, and exploded fables with the high and manly views of Paul on the same subject, and tell us what makes the difference? Why has the one fallen into scientific as well as exegetical errors, and the other not? According to the verbal theory, the reason is plain, but according to the one under discussion, this is utterly inexplicable. The quotations from Barnabas strike it with a double edge, for they prove first, the profound and even superstitious reverence which the primitive church had for the very words of Scripture, as inspired receptacles of revealed truth, a thing denied by Mr. Morell: and they show in the second place, that men who were not of the number of these canonical writers, though their very companions and colaborers, were yet liable to all the errors of their age; a fact which proves that this remarkable exemption from error can only be accounted for by supposing precisely such an influence of the Holy Ghost, as this theory denies.

Another fact which contradicts this theory, is, the admitted limitation of these higher phenomena of inspiration, to these fifty writers.

If these phenomena be generically the same with the actings of the intuitional consciousness, or with a high degree of sanctification, why have they appeared in so few? Surely if inspiration be only an intensification and clarification of the pure reason, we may naturally look for it wherever that reason has been largely developed, and directed to the subject of religion. Now it cannot for a moment be doubted that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, had a larger development, and a more scientific culture of the intuitive faculty than Asaph and Amos, Mark and James. Why then, are not their writings on the subject of religion equally true

and authoritative? And why have these phenomena ceased with these men? By the terms of this new philosophy, the intuitional consciousness of the human race is constantly developing and working itself to a higher range and a clearer vision. Why then has it failed to produce these phenomena, which, according to this theory, are identical with its development? Bacon, Newton, and Kant had, if this theory of progressive development be true, necessarily, a larger and clearer unfolding of this consciousness than some of these writers; why were not they as fully inspired? If they were, where is the proof of the fact, either in their claims, their writings, or their influence? If they were not, the theory breaks hopelessly down.

Another fact that conflicts with this theory, is, the wonderful beauty and power of these writings.

Here are the compositions of plain, unlettered men and women, which as mere literary productions, have stood peerless and unattainable, in their strange power to touch and move the human heart. It is an inexplicable fact to this theory, that a Deborah, an Amos and a Mary, have, whilst under the power of this high afflatus, produced some of the finest poetic effusions in ancient literature. But this fact, difficult as it is, gives way before another which is more hopelessly inexplicable. It is that mysterious *power* which these words possess. Even Coleridge, in his attempt to unsettle the common theory, confesses that the Bible meets him further down in his nature, and speaks deeper to his heart than any other book. This is a fact that has again and again been felt. There are times in a man's history, when these words seem to blaze with such a depth of significance, that we tremble with awe, or thrill with gladness, at the unutterable things that glow and stretch away behind them. They seem like apertures through which we see the awful light of eternity. This is not the fancy of a few heated enthusiasts, but the recorded testimony of some of the calmest, loftiest, and purest minds of our race. Nor is it a mere literary phenomenon, for it is felt by the Caffre

woman in the bush, and the toiling artizan in the workshop, as deeply as by the mystic dreamer of Kubla Khan, or the lofty Jansenist of Port Royal. They all testify with one voice, that as they gaze on these words, there are periods when they seem to open up a shaft of light, which at one time is all flashing with the brightness of Heaven, and at another, all red with the glare of Hell. How can this fact, as a mere psychological phenomenon, be explained? If it be true that Jehovah has in very deed enshrined Himself in these wonderful words, unfolding a gleam of the awful Shekinah to the unveiled and disenchanted spirit, we can understand this strange and mysterious power. If these books be as some wondrous wind-harp, or some Memnonian sculpture, from whose depths the breath of God's mouth, and the light of God's presence evoke this strange melody, we can comprehend to some extent, the secret of its entrancing strains. But if, as this theory teaches, there is no such indwelling of the Godhead in these writings; and no such breathing of God's Spirit through these words, this fact stands before us, in the phenomena of mind, an inscrutable and inexplicable mystery.

A kindred fact to these, is the amazing effect that these writings have had on human society.

Without referring to the history of the past, it is sufficient to point to the map of the world, and advert to the fact, that wherever you find greatness, growth and power, civil rights, and civil liberty, national prosperity and national happiness, there you will find a free and open Bible; and wherever you find the Bible restrained, or entirely absent, even though the institutions of Christianity are existing and acting, there you will find in the same proportion the absence of these social and national characteristics. Mere natural causes cannot explain this fact. The same old and solemn river still flows past Memphis and Thebes; the same sapphire sky yet hangs over Babylon and Bagdad; and the same tall mountains look down like giant watchers on the plains where the Persian, the Greek, the Roman and the Turk erected the gorgeous memorials of

their majesty and might. But the glory has departed. And whither? It is found precisely in those lands where the Bible goes freely and broadly forth. And though these lands should be but a misty isle in the ocean, or a continent sleeping but a few years since in the silence of a primeval forest, yet with an open Bible in their habitations, these hardy Anglo Saxons shall wield the destinies of the world. Now if it be true, that these writings, like the Ark of God, contain the shrined Shekinah, the very light of Almightyness, we can understand their power, and marvel not that they have evoked such mighty results in human history, for we see that these results are to be referred to the Anglo Saxon Bible, rather than to the Anglo Saxon blood. But if not, we cannot see why other books, written by men in no apparent respect the inferiors of many of these, and discussing the same great truths, should yet produce an effect so circumscribed and shallow compared with them; and we stand before this fact, bewildered and confounded in astonishment.

Another objection to this theory is, that it destroys the authority of the Bible, and thus destroys its influence, and tends to defeat its great purpose in the world.

We are aware that the argument from consequences is not always a valid one, but neither is it always invalid. "You say," replied Rousseau to one of his antagonists, "that the truth can do no harm. I know it, and for that reason, do I know that your opinion is an error." Nor was the brilliant Frenchman wrong in this acute response. Truth can do no harm, but falsehood may; and if we see that a position or theory inevitably tends to do harm, we may fairly urge this as, at least, a presumption of its error.

If the Bible is not an inspired rule of faith and practice, we are, of course, not bound to believe and do what it enjoins, any further than we are to obey the writings of any other wise and good men. What restraint then have we for the masses? What spell that can curb their wild and lawless passions? If their blind reasonings lead them to agrarianism, so-

cialism, revolution or anarchy, what word of man shall be mighty enough to arrest them in their rush of ruin? Must not the voice of reason be drowned in the roar of revolution?

Germany furnishes us a case exactly in point. Strauss, in his life of Jesus, labored most earnestly to inculcate essentially this theory, and succeeded in giving it a wide prevalence in all classes of society. He denied that the Bible was the inspired word of God, and its teachings authoritative. The dragon's teeth were thus sown broadcast over the land, the fell harvest soon showed its bristling array, in the terrible scenes of 1848. When these popular uprisings began to startle the world, the learned professor began to recoil from the consequences of his theory. He found that he had unchained the tiger, and sought to coax and wheedle him back to his cage. He therefore traversed the villages of his native Swabia, striving to undo the dreadful work he had wrought in the minds of the peasantry. These efforts have been published in what he terms his *Theologico-Political Discourses*, and in them he thus addresses the peasantry. "It is not for you, that I wrote the life of Jesus. Let this work alone, it will impart doubts which you have not now. You have better things to read. Study, especially, precepts like these: Blessed are the pure in heart! Blessed are the merciful!" But who reasons most logically, if this theory be true, the peasant or the philosopher? The peasant, undoubtedly; for it would be hard to prove to him, that what is a truth to him, is a lie to his neighbor; that he is bound by a book which does not bind the philosopher; and that he is in duty bound to revere and obey a religion which the philosopher recommends only as a substitute for the police officer and the constable. Hence he claims the same freedom with the philosopher, and refuses to pinion himself with a politic falsehood.

Nor is the sweep of this theory limited to the simple peasant. If the Bible be not an infallible standard of belief and practice, then the philosopher has no basis of certitude as to any thing that is not a matter of direct sensation or conscious-

ness. God, Heaven, Hell, Eternity, Judgment, Resurrection, and all the unseen and the spiritual, are shrouded in voiceless and terrible uncertainty. The state of facts declared by these writers of the Bible, may be the true one, but we have no more absolute certainty of it than we have of the opinions of Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato or Epicurus. These men may have been inspired, but we have no proof of the fact on which we can rely. And even if they were inspired, that inspiration in their minds avails nothing to us, unless we are sure that we have a certain and reliable record of the truths perceived by them in this inspired state. They may have truly received the word from God, but this is of little avail to us, unless we know that they have as truly transmitted it to us. Hence, if this be all the inspiration they possessed, however valuable it may have been to them, it is of little value to us, and can only serve to tantalize us with the knowledge that these few men have been favored with a light from Heaven, whilst the rest of mankind have been left only to that amount of this light which they, in their imperfect and undirected judgment, have been able to transmit. We are yet without any distinct utterance on which we can rely to tell us what we must certainly believe, and what we must necessarily do.

It is replied to this by Mr. Morell and the modern philosophy, that the only and the sufficient basis of certitude, is the dictates of the universal consciousness of the human race. We ask what are these dictates? Where are they recorded? Who are their reporters? And who shall tell us which reporter is the most trustworthy? The old Egyptian and Chaldaic teachings were overturned by Pythagoras; he is set aside by the Porch and the Academy in their multitudinous ramifications; they by the Gnostics and Neo-Platonists; they by the Schoolmen; they by the Cartesians; they by Leibnitz and Wolf; they by Locke and Hume; they by Kant; he by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Strauss, Cousin, &c., &c., and they by the next avatar of the philosophic spirit, the arrival of which has not yet been telegraphed. In this

chase of phantoms, what shall we believe? May not the next morning newspaper that gives us the price of stocks and cotton, also inform us of the appearance of some new philosopher whose teachings shall supplant all his predecessors, and leave us bankrupt in our faith? What shall we trust? Jesus we know, and Paul we know, and can discover the truth if they have taught it. We also know that Augustine and Luther, and the great mass of theologians have taught essentially the same things. If then the Bible be the standard of truth, we know what to believe; if not, we are launched on a shoreless and fathomless ocean, without landmark, or pilot, or chart or compass, while the waters are covered with darkness.

But if the general suffrage of the enlightened consciousness of the human race be, as this philosophy avers, the ultimate basis of certitude, and therefore the last tribunal of appeal, we can of course carry this question there for decision. If this basis be valid for other matters of opinion, much more must it be for this which is under discussion. It is alleged by this theory, that inspiration is nothing but the elevation and illumination of this intuitive consciousness to the perception of spiritual truth. Of course then, if there is any case which we may safely refer to this chosen tribunal, it is the present, an alleged phenomenon of its own nature. And if there is any expression of this consciousness on which we can rely, it is found in the prevailing opinions of the Christian church, in the bosom of which these phenomena of inspiration are confessedly found. What then is the testimony of the Christian consciousness on this point. Does it recognize these high functions which are alleged to belong to it? We but record a notorious fact in ecclesiastical history, when we say that its response to this appeal is in direct and emphatic contradiction of the averments of this theory. It positively denies that among its phenomena are included those of inspiration. This question is not one that is sprung upon the consciousness of the church, now for the first time, but one which has been before her in various forms for centuries. And al-

though this precise form of a theory to be substituted for that of verbal inspiration may not have been previously presented, yet all that is essential to it has been before the church for many generations, and received the most emphatic condemnation and rejection. Every student of the history of Christian doctrine knows, that from Theodore of Mopsuesta down to the last nine days wonder in the Fatherland, those who have held any views denying the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, have been regarded as heretics and enemies of the truth. The researches of such men as Lardner, Whitby, and Rudelbach, especially the latter, have established it beyond contradiction, that true or false, the verbal theory has always been that of the Christian church. Surely then, if there was ever a point on which the purified consciousness of humanity has pronounced, and on which its decisions can be ascertained, it is the one now before us. Hence, when philosophy appeals from the written word, to this collective consciousness, on a point so clearly within its jurisdiction, and so long before its consideration, the appellant must abide by the decisions of the chosen arbiter. Now as the distinct affirmation of the Christian consciousness, for many generations is, that inspiration is not among its phenomena, we allege that, as an *argumentum ad hominem*, this decision is absolutely fatal to the theory under discussion.

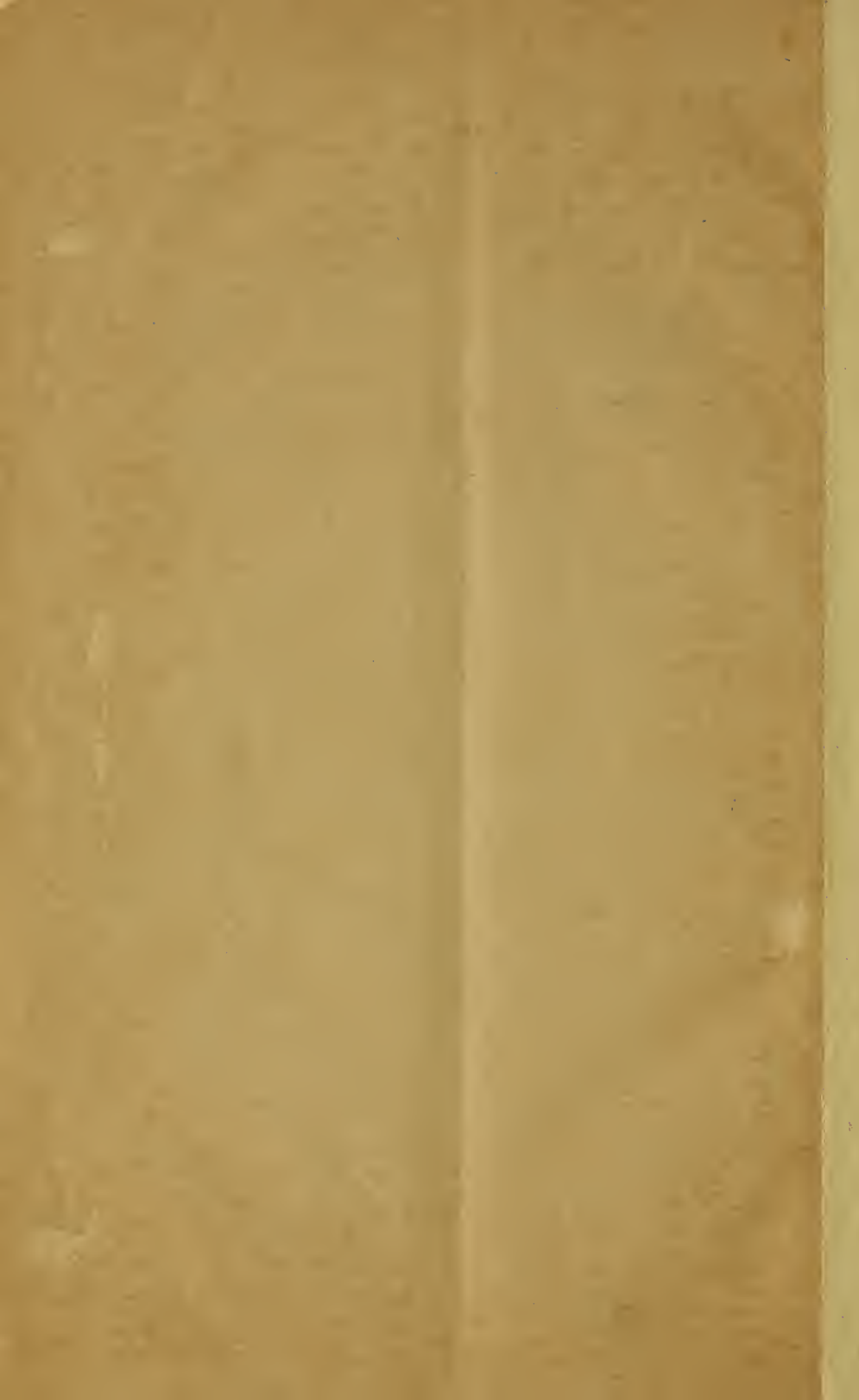
If then this theory of inspiration is a mere arbitrary figment, invented to remove some difficulties that are more imaginary than real; if it has been formed not only without reference to the facts to be explained by it, but in direct contradiction of them; if it removes us from one difficulty by plunging us into others tenfold more embarrassing; if it relieves the reason of man at the expense of the righteousness of God; if it takes from us our only lamp of guidance in the vale of tears, and then tells us to find the path to Heaven by our own purblind vision, when false lights are gleaming and gliding all around us; if it teaches that God has taken less care to ensure the accurate publication of his laws and amnesties,

than the most negligent and tyrannical government on earth has done of theirs; if it teaches that He has required us to believe the truth under the most terrific penalties, and yet has made no certain provision that what is offered to our belief is the truth; if it teaches that effects the most extraordinary have been produced by causes the most ordinary and inadequate; if it destroys the reverence that men have for the Bible, neutralizes its authority over them, and leads them to neglect and disobey its injunctions, thus defeating the very end of its production, and charging its author with folly; if it is ignored at the very tribunal to which it has carried its final appeal; then we are at liberty to reject it as false, and cling to the honored faith of our fathers; the faith that cheered them in sorrow, that nerved them in danger, and that upheld them in death, that this blessed Book is indeed the word of the living God, and that in listening to its wondrous tidings, we are listening to the voice of the Eternal and the Almighty, inasmuch as "all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God," and given because "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

It is with joy then, that we find this last, and in some respects, most powerful effort to overturn our old and cherished faith, as empty and weak as those that have gone before it. Philosophy and human wisdom may neglect this light from Heaven, and walk by the sparks of their own kindling, but this light can never be put out, even though these proud wanderers should have it at God's hand to lie down at last in sorrow and gloom.

Life lies before you, young man, all gleaming and flashing in the light of your early hopes, like a summer sea. But bright though it seem in the silvery sheen of its far-off beauty, it is a place where many a sunken rock and many a treacherous quicksand have made shipwreck of immortal hopes. And calm though its polished surface may sleep, without a ripple or a shade, it shall yet be overhung to you by the darkness of the night, and the wildness of the tempest. And oh! if in

these lonely and perilous scenes of your voyage, you were left without a landmark or a beacon, how sad and fearful were your lot. But blessed be God! you are not. Far up on the rock of ages, there streams a light from the Eternal Word, the light that David saw and rejoiced; the light that Paul saw and took courage; the light that has guided the ten thousand times ten thousand, that have already reached the happy isles of the blest. There it stands, the Pharos of this dark and stormy scene, with a flame that was kindled in Heaven, and that comes down to us reflected from many a glorious image of prophet, apostle and martyr. Many a rash and wicked spirit has sought to put out this light, and on the pinion of a reckless daring, has furiously dashed itself against it, but has only fallen stunned and blackened in the surf below. Many a storm of hate and fury, has dashed wildly against it, covering it for a time with spray, but when the fiercest shock has spent its rage, and the proud waves rolled all shivered and sullenly back, the beacon has still gleamed on high and clear above the raging waters. Another storm is now dashing against it; and another cloud of mist is flung around it, but when these also have expended their might, the rock, and the beacon shall be unharmed still. "We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." When this promised time shall have come, when the dappling dawn shall have broadened and brightened into the perfect day, then, and not until then, shall the light of this sure beacon pale before the brightness of that day, whose morning is Heaven, and whose noon-tide is eternity. But until then, in spite of the false lights that flash upon our track, and gleam fitfully from billow to billow, our steady gaze and our earnest heed shall be to this sure word of prophecy, and the motto we shall ever unfurl to the winds, shall be, "*the Bible, the Bible, the light-house of the world.*"



[Faint, illegible handwriting]

Stockton, Calif.

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